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4-H CLUB MEMBERS MAKE INTELLIGENT FARMERS AND HOMEMAKERS

A radio talk by T. M. Campbell, field agent, U. S. Department of Agriculture, delivered on the National 4-H Club radio program, Saturday, April 1, 1933, by a network of 59 associate NBC radio stations.

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Today, 4-H club work is recognized as a medium through which young negroes may become more intelligent farmers and homemakers.

When extension work was begun among negroes in 1906, it was the accepted policy to work almost wholly with adults, 4-H club work being a secondary development. But negro children naturally followed in the footsteps of their parents in the practice of better farm and home methods, so that in 1914, when the Smith-Lever act was passed, additional funds were provided to help strengthen and reinforce that portion of work being done. Now at the end of a 19 year period a comparatively large number of boys and girls have passed the 4-H club age limit, have married and are now demonstrating to their neighbors and to the public at large that they can execute a more profitable farm and home program than did their forbears.

This is by no means an easy task when it is considered that a large percentage of the parents of these negro children, year after year mortgage all of their personal property for funds to make the crops. Such transactions often force them to engage in unprofitable practices.

Negro 4-H club members, despite their many handicaps become distinct assets to the communities in which they live. The three hundred negro farm and home demonstration agents now employed represent a dynamic force in the lives of these young people. They spend the nights in the homes; converse with them in their own simple language about their problems; they encourage the parents to educate their children and supply practical farm and home plans for the family.

The case of William Ellis, Oktibbeha County, Mississippi, is indicative of the better dairying campaign that is claiming the attention of the Southern negro farmer. Beginning as a 4-H club boy, Ellis applied the information gained in solving his problems. He confined himself to home dairying from the time he married until 1927 when he began on a commercial scale with 6 cows. Under extension methods his business has grown steadily each year. He now has a modern dairy barn, a herd of 40 Jersey cows, operates a milking machine, separators, automatic churn and has a concrete silo of 120 ton capacity. He has a ready market for his dairy products at a nearby condensary. His average net income is \$250.00 per month. He is educating his children and is a respected citizen in his community.

In proportion as 4-H club methods are disseminated among boys and girls, things that are objectionable in our old methods of farming are gradually passing away. New methods, as fast as their utility and value can be demonstrated, are coming into use. In this connection, special mention is due Mrs. Lilla Moss, Macon County, Alabama, who became a 4-H club member as a girl and worked on the farm and in the home until she married in 1911. She and her husband began as

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renters. In five years they were able to make a down payment on 90 acres of land. Practicing 4-H club methods, Mrs. Moss produced and marketed fruits, vegetables, milk and poultry regularly, so that the crops could be financed each year. She also made the last payment of \$300.00 on the farm when it came due. With the farm paid for, Mrs. Moss turned her attention toward a better home. She persuaded her husband to sell 30 acres of their land to be used for that purpose. With the expenditure of \$1,000, they were able to move from a three room shack into a new six room bungalow, located, built and furnished according to plans supplied by the county home demonstration agent.

Hundreds of such negro families all over the South are today leading the way to better rural life in a most outstanding and satisfactory manner.

Hence my conclusion that it is better for these young people and better for the whole country that they, in the morning of their lives be trained in the fundamentals of farm life and citizenship; so that when they reach maturity they will be thoroughly prepared to start out as farmers and homemakers -- a group that in the past has done so much, and is destined in the future to do even more towards the prosperity and happiness of all mankind.
